

From the 2008 Community Working Session

Purposes of the Session:

- Take advantage of the unique opportunities offered at this time and place
- Align current community planning interests
- Integrate planning for public investments (RapidRide, street and park improvements) with private development projects
- Discuss a framework to guide near and long term implementation

Summary of Small Group Reports

Benefits:

Location, location: The area's location makes it the gateway to West Seattle and the views of the city and mountains when heading towards the bridge are spectacular. It was noted that the drama is in departing and that the arrival view is disappointing.

Topography, street-grid and public facilities: The character, topography and location of the triangle make it ideal for a new neighborhood. The area is well defined; has wide, flat public rights-of-way offering ample space to create inviting pedestrian environments; easy transit access to downtown; the YMCA is at its core; it is walkable to the Junction and adjacent to the golf course and Camp Long.

Blank slate: An area in transition with many underdeveloped sites, opportunity to modify zoning and land use to fit the desired future, including jobs and housing.

Challenges:

Property ownerships: Although many community members, including property owners, are interested in the area's potential to develop, there are concerns regarding a change from the current auto-oriented businesses. There are many properties under different ownership so realizing a vision with multiple parties could be difficult.

Conflicting goals: It will be a challenge to balance the community's desire for pedestrian and bike-friendly streets and sustainable infrastructure with the anticipated parking demand and the traffic impacts it will have.

Traffic: The area is surrounded by hard to cross streets - Fauntleroy Way SW, SW Alaska Street and 35th Avenue SW - major arterials with fast moving traffic. It isolates the area for those within it and those wanting to reach it from surrounding areas.

Current land use: Vacancies, lack of interim uses especially for highly visible properties, current auto-oriented businesses, and the lack of good development at the entry corners fail to create a "gateway" to West Seattle and make the area feel "scaleless" and "edgeless" in its current condition.

Parking: Parking availability is a recurring concern. Participants perceived a problem with “park & hide” where commuters park in the Triangle area all day and get on the bus near the West Seattle Bridge – a problem they attributed partly to a lack of sufficient transit service in West Seattle. Participants anticipated this would increase with the addition of a RapidRide stop. Others were concerned that the addition of new development without sufficient parking would further exacerbate what they view as an existing parking challenge. Some felt the inclusion of a shared parking garage was needed - and others felt a park & ride garage was necessary.

Important Elements:

Cohesive Urban Design: Plan the area to make best use of its existing assets to create a walkable, livable place with flexible right-of-way development, lots of trees and landscape and a tree lined, humanized Fauntleroy Boulevard that creates a positive experience for the pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

Gateway & view corridors

Make this the gateway to West Seattle. Grab the corners so that both public and private development contribute to the sense of gateway. Preserve and use the view corridors.

Sense of place

Take pride in West Seattle’s strong sense of community and place. It is an asset to build upon in the redevelopment of the triangle. The triangle can offer a series of experiences, a clearly defined pedestrian relationship to the Junction and an integration of retail with the surrounding neighborhood. An important question will be whether the future businesses serve its residents or the broader West Seattle community.

Open Space

Use the wide public rights-of-way to create a pedestrian-friendly environment, look for opportunities to include open spaces scaled to community use and to create stronger connections to the public open spaces across 35th by improved pedestrian crossings and good trailhead connections.

Community Facilities

Build on the YMCA as a community-wide facility. Improve its visibility and access. Consider other uses such as daycares and community schools.

Family Housing

Consider the need for both family and affordable housing in the mix of plans for the area rather than focusing primarily on singles and couples.